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Extracts from an Arabic work relating to Aden. 108552

No. 1009-237, dated Bushire, 24th September 1875.

From—Lieut.-Col. E. C. Ross, H. B. M.'s Poltl. Resident in the Persian Gulf,

To—C. U. Aitchison, Esq., C.S.I., Secy. to the Govt. of India, Foreign Dept.

I have the honor to transmit copy of a letter No. 358-130, dated 1st September 1875, from Lieutenant-Colonel S. B. Miles, Political Agent at Muscat, accompanied by a translation* of extracts from an Arabic work relating to Aden, which Colonel Miles desires to place at the disposal of Government.

In original.

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No. 358-130, dated Muscat, 1st September 1875.

From—Lieut.-Col. S. B. Miles, H. B. M.'s Political Agent and Consul, Muscat,

To—Lieut.-Col. E. C. Ross, H. B. M.'s Poltl. Resident in the Persian Gulf.

I do myself the honor to forward herewith some notes on Aden, extracted from an Arabic manuscript, and shall feel obliged, if you consider them worthy, by your submitting the same to Government.

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The following notes giving a glimpse at the state of Aden six centuries ago are taken from the Itinerary of Ibn El Mojawir called the *Tarikh-el-Mostabsir* and have been selected, not as being by any means the most interesting portion of the book, but as relating to a part of Arabia to which more than usual interest attaches as being a British possession. The author does not give a connected account of current events at Aden, but he offers some information respecting the internal condition of the place and the fiscal arrangements of the Government, which is not altogether without interest. Ibn El Mojawir was not a native of Aden, but kept a journal, and noted down what he saw and heard in the towns and countries he visited; he is quoted by El Khuzraji, the historian of Yemen, as an authority for the period at which he wrote. The text of the manuscript is very corrupt and full of *lacunæ*, which may account for some of the deficiencies of translation.

(Sd.) S. B. Miles, *Lieut.-Col.*,
*H. B. M.'s Poltl. Agent and Consul, Muscat.*

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*On the state of Aden in former times.*

From the Red Sea to Aden and beyond Jebel Sokotera was one united expanse of land; there was no sea in it and no gulf. Then came Dhul Karnein in his tour of conquest and arrived at that place, and Abu Jafar having opened the gulf towards the ocean the sea flowed into it until it stopped at Bab-el-Mandeb, and Aden remained in the sea which surrounded it. After that nothing was visible from Aden except the summits of mountains like islands, and we have proofs of that. Firstly, it is known that the marks which the sea and the waves have left remain visible on the summits of Jebel el Kar and on the mountain on which is the fort of Ta'kar and on Jebel Akhdar. And the second proof is that Shedâd bin 'Ad did not build Irem Dhât 'Imâd except between Lahej and the gulf on one side, and Mawya, which is on the road to Mafalis, on the other, and that side which is toward Jebel Darreena is desert. He did not build it except in the most odoriferous lands and breezes and airs in a delicious country far from the sea. At the present time the sea has returned to the neighbourhood of Irem Dhât 'Imâd and swallowed up part of it, and the sea would not be there had it not been for the opening made by Dhul Karnein, by which it expanded itself from the island of Sokotera and flowed until it stopped at the extremity of El Mandeb. The third proof is that the sea, which is between Sareen and its limit, is called Mutarid El Kheil and Murabit El Kheil, and it was there that the Arabs originally used to tether their horses in that country. It is certain also they used to exercise their horses there when it was dry land. When Dhul Karnein opened Bab-el Mandeb all

the country was flooded, and no signs of it were left except some islands that were formed in the sea, and it is called by its original name Mutarid El Kheil. From what is stated by the Ameer Abu Tainee Jciâsh bin Nejab in his book *El Mufeid fi Akhbar Zebîd El Awal* (for there are two Mufeids, the first whose author is the Ameer Jciâsh, and the second, composed by Fakhr-ul-deen Abu Ali Amara bin Mahomed bin Amara), it appears that the sea had greatly diminished when the Abyssinians conquered the Arabian Peninsula. They took possession of Sanaa at the border of the country of the 'Awahil, and their dynasty remained there both in pre-Islamite and Mahomedan times until Ali bin Mehdi destroyed them in the year 554 A.H., when their power disappeared and their rule declined with extreme rapidity. To return to the account of Dhul Karnein. The sea remained in that state until Dhul Karnein opened Bab-el Mandeb, and the sea flowed into it and reached the end of Kulzum, when it spread out and extended until it laid bare the land of Aden. The account that Abu Abdulla Mahomed ibn Abdulla Al Keysani gives in his commentary is that when Shedad bin Ad set out from Yemen to visit the dependencies of Hadhramaut, and had passed the borders of Lahej, he saw Jebel Izz and conjectured from its size that it was very distant; he therefore sent his retainers to explore this mountain and see what was below it. When they had examined the place, they returned and said it was a valley in which were trees and huge serpents, and that it overlooked the salt sea. When he heard this account Shedad descended to Lahej and ordered his people to dig wells, and from these the people of Aden still continue to draw water. He also ordered they should excavate for him an entrance in the side of the valley.

*Excavation of the entrance and aqueduct.*

The excavation of the gate and aqueduct was performed by two men, and the wise men of Hind say they were Efreets of the Jinn. One of them commenced excavating the rock, while the other began to dig the trench at Ras Socotra, in the dependency of Lahej, and the two did not cease from their exertions in excavating and tunnelling until but little was left of the work. Then said the excavator—"If it be the will of God the Almighty, to-morrow I shall be free and have finished my work." And the digger of the trench said, "and I to-morrow will cause the water to enter Aden whether it please God or no!" Then it came to pass that the aqueduct became broken in various places and the spring of water was checked at its source, and what had been built up fell down, and no part of it was completed, nor was any benefit derivable from it. The trench had been brought to the foot of Jebel Hadeed, when it was brought to nought * * * * * * *. But when the morning of the morrow came to the excavator the tunnel was finished, and the gate was opened, and the work was accomplished as he desired. It is said he was engaged in the excavation for a period of seventy years until it was completed. After a long space of time Shedad bin Ad used to throw into that place those who deserved imprisonment, and it remained a prison until the end of the dynasty that was at that time over Egypt, and after the decline of that dynasty the place became ruined.

*Cities used as prisons.*

Siraf was the prison of Sultan Mahmoud bin Mohammed bin Sam, and Aden was a prison of the Pharoahs, but it ceased to be a prison under the Fatimites. The Indians say Aden was the prison of Das Sir, the name of a Jinn with ten heads, one of which was that of the deer Dilaeser, and he used to dwell on Jebel Mundhir, and to disport himself on the sands of Hokat Bay, and after that Hokat was inhabited by Indians, and no one was expelled therefrom except Soliman, son of Daood, on whom be peace, when he arrived at the land of Yemen to visit Bilkees, and this was by reason of the people before described being Efreets. Aden was so called, because he who founded it called it after his son Aden. Some say, however, that it derived the name of Aden from the tribe of Ad. It

is also said that the first man who was imprisoned in it was named Aden, and it was called after him. And Ibu Mojawir says it derived the name of Aden from Ma'aden, because it was formerly an iron mine, and it was called by the Persians Akhirsikeen, and by the Indians Siran. The merchants call it Tâkal Saida, and it is also known as "Pharoah's prison," "the abode of Jinns," and "the shore of the sea." By the Indians it is named Hatâm, and by gentle folks it is considered a filthy place, because whatever people throw out there the wind drives back upon them; and it is styled by some the Custom House of Yemen. The house called by the common people *the house of good fortune* is the house built by Seif-ul-Islam Taghtagin opposite the Custom House, and they call *the long house* the house built by Ibn Halem facing the Custom House. The house named Mundhir is the house built by Malik El Maiz Ismail bin Taghtagin upon Jebel Hokat, and it is called by merchants Seera and Heera. Jebel Seera is a lofty rock in the sea confronting Aden and Jebel Mundhir, of which it is said to be a portion. Mohammed bin Abdulla El Keysani says in his commentary that on the day of Judgment fire will be emitted from the Seera of Aden and drive the people to hell, and the proof of that is, that in the heart of the rock is a well named Amber, and the sages of Hind call it Bir Yeran, and smoke issues from it perpetually. It is now called Bir Heramasat, and no one is able to look at it on account of its terribleness and its gloom and vapour. Round about the well are found broken stones and snakes sleeping and animals standing, and the Indians say that Hunweet, the before mentioned Efreet, dug this well, which indeed is not a well, but a subterranean passage excavated under the sea to the city of Oojein Bikrami, which is the capital of the King of Malwa in India. It was stated to me by Mubarak El Sharoni Moula, father of Mohammed bin Mesood, saying the cause of the excavation of the well Yeran was Hadather, and this Efreet stole the couch of the wife of Ram Hyder from the province of Oudh and flew with her until he rested on the summit of Jebel Seera. He then said toher:—I desire to change your form from that of a human being to that of a Jinn, and they began to wrangle, and Hunweet, who was an Efreet in the form of an ape, hearing them quarrel dug this passage from the city of Oojein Bikrami under the sea until it terminated in the centre of Jebel Seera, and he completed it all in one night. Issuing from the passage he found her (Hyder's wife) sleeping under a thorn tree on the top of the hill, so he took her on his back and descended with her into the passage, and ceased not to proceed with her until he arrived at Oojein Bikrami about daybreak, when he delivered her to her husband, Ram Hyder, who became blessed with two male children by her, one of whom was named Luth and the other Kus, and her's is a long story and requires a lengthy narration, but the passage exists to this day. To return to the former subject. When ships are retarded by the monsoon in their endeavours to reach the mouth of Aden harbour, they bring to Jebel Seera seven oxen about the time of sunset, and leave them in some place until the middle of the night. Towards the end of the night they send back six to Aden leaving but one ox there, which they sacrifice in the morning, and they call that sacrifice "the sacrifice of the hill." When they have done this the ships are able to approach and arrive one after the other. This custom was instituted in ancient times during the sway of the Beni Zuree and other Arab dynasties, but the practice has ceased in our time.

*Note.*—When a ship on a voyage weathers Sokotera or Jebel Kudmul, they call that weathering "El Foulah," and they take a dish and put in it a sail and rudder and the other appurtenances of a ship, and place therein some morsels of cocoanut, salt, and pomegranate and float it on the sea in the raging waves, and then say that it draws near and arrives in safety to the foot of the hill.

*The building of Aden.*

With the fall of the Empire of the Pharoahos, Aden became ruined and deserted, and the peninsula was inhabited only by fishermen who pursued their occupation there. These remained a long time provided by God's bounty, until the men of Kamar came in their ships in great numbers and took possession of

the peninsula after they had expelled the fishermen by force, and they dwelt on the summits of Jebel Ahmar and Kokat and Jebel Munzhir which overlook the farms, and their signs and works are extant to this day in stone and mortar filling the valleys and hills. The poet says—

As for me I weep copiously; for their houses have become empty.
And the leader of their camels has departed.
The anguish of separation makes me mad.
I stand on their habitations raving about them and asking:—
O houses! have you news of them?
Return me an answer quickly.
It was answered me from their houses wailing and crying:—
Weep blood, O neglectful one!
The caravans have departed.
My slave girl is with them: in elegance and qualities perfect;
In face and form roselike and thornlike.

They used to start from El Kamar reaching Aden in one voyage and in one season. Ibn El Mojawir says that that race of people has died out, and their dynasty become extinct and their career terminated, and no one is to be found in our time who knows the history of them or can relate their condition and actions. Ibn El Mojawir says:—From Aden to Makdasho is one season (or journey), and from Makdasho to Kilwa another season's voyage, and from Kilwa to Kamar a third season; but that tribe used to perform the three seasons' journey in one season, for one ship actually performed the voyage from Kamar to Aden in this way in the year 626 A.H.; starting from El Kamar and bound for Kilwa it anchored at Aden. Their vessels had outriggers on account of the straitness of the seas and danger of the currents, and shallowness of the water there. When the tribe became enfeebled the Berbers overpowered them and expelled them thence, and possessed the land and inhabited the valley, the space now occupied by mat huts, and they were the first who erected mat huts in Aden. After them the place became ruined, and so remained until the men of Siraf invaded it, and mention has already been made of them before. And Sultan Shah bin Jemshid proceeded to Aden, and having disembarked established himself there, and the place became re-peopled thereby. It was his intention to have brought drinking water by aqueduct for the people from Zeila,* but the distance proved too great, so he built tanks to collect the rain water, and the clay used for building them was brought from the neighbourhood of Abien, or, as some say, from Zeila. When the population of Aden had much increased, several baths were erected, one bath being built near the Habs El Dam. In the year 622 A.H. a heavy torrent descended and swept clean the whole town. The Jama mosque was constructed near the bath of Motamid Razi-ul-Deen Ali bin Mahomed El Tukreeti, and this Prince built stables for his elephants in the year 625 A.H. And the population filled the space at the foot of Jabel Akhdar in its whole length and breadth, and when he perceived that he assumed the Sultanate.

*Titles and names of the Kings of Ajam who ruled over the country of Aden.*

1. Sultan Shah bin Jemshid bin Asaad ibn Kaisar.
2. Abu Sinan Siawash bin Asaad bin Kaisar Kaseem Amir El Momineen.
3. Abu El Moozuffar Asaad bin Kaisar Burkan Amir El Momineen.
4. Abu Shajaa Namshad bin Asaad bin Kaisar Nasra Amir El Momineen.
5. Abu El Fatah Keikobad bin Mahomed bin Kaisar Moiz Amir El Momineen.
6. Abu Saeed Kaisar bin Rustam bin Kaisar Umdat Amir El Momineen.
7. Abu Samsan Ad bin Shedad bin Jemshed bin Asaad ibn Kaisar Yemeen Amir El Momineen.

* Zeila is a hamlet about forty miles north of Aden, where there is a perennial stream.

8. Abu El Mulk Taj-ul-deen Jemshed bin Asaad bin Kaisar Zabir Amir El Momineen.

9. Abu El Wafa Kudar Shah bin Hezeraat Yemeen Amir El Momineen.

10. Abu El Burkat El Harith Hazaraat bin Jemshed bin Asaad Husain Amir El Momineen.

These were the Persian Kings who ruled in Aden.

*Building of the walls of Aden.*

It was related to me by Abdulla bin Mohammed bin Yehia that a ship from the west once anchored at Aden at night, and the Captain having landed was walking around Aden, when he came to a lofty house in which were lighted candles and perfumes burning, so he knocked at the door and a slave descended and opened to him saying, do you require aught? The Captain replied yes; so the slave asked permission for him, and the master of the house said let him come, so he ascended, and they saluted each other being unacquainted, and they began to converse, and the Captain said, I have arrived this night from the west, and I desire of the master's kindness that he will conceal for me some valuables. He said why? The Captain replied, I am in fear of the Dai. Then the master of the house said, I consent, have no fear of oppressors, transport all you have to a certain house. So the Captain descended, and the merchants began to land their property from the ship in boxes and transport them to the house until they had lightened the ship of two-thirds of the cargo. When the morning came the Captain found his host of the night before to be the Dai himself, and he said to himself "I sought shelter from the rain and sat down beneath the spout;" and he was troubled in mind, and his face became clouded. Then the Dai sent for him and said to him, I am your friend of last night, and I am the Dai, the Governor of Aden at this time; be comforted and set your mind at ease; the customs duties on your ship are a present from me to thee with the house in which you have alighted, and these 1,000 dinars are for your expenses while you remain in our city. God forbid I should take anything from you either in the way of present or of trade. The Captain then said, Wherefore is all this done to me? The Dai said, On account of your entering upon me in my house at midnight. Then he gave orders that the wall should be extended from Hisn Akhdar to Jebel Hokat, but they constructed a very weak wall, and it fell down bodily and was destroyed by the unceasing action of the waves on it, and when it was ruined he built on it another wall of interlaced canes, and this remains to the present day. Abu Othman Omar bin Othman ibn Ali El Zangebili El Tukreeti built a wall running along the height of Munzhir to the end of Jebel El Izz, and erected on it the Hokat gate; and he built a second wall on Jebel Akhdar, the extent of which was from Hisn Akhdar to El Takhar on the ridge of the hill. He also constructed a wall on the shore from El Tabagha to Jebel Hokat, in which were six gates, *viz.*, the Sabagha and Juma gates; the Sikka gate, which has two entrances or arches through which the torrent rushes when it rains at Aden; the Furza or customs gate for the merchandize to pass in and out; Bab Musharif or Musharij gate, which is continually open for the passage of people; and Bab Habak, that is always closed; there is also the gate to the interior that has been mentioned before. The walls were built of stone and mortar, and he also constructed the Custom House, placing in it two gates. Ibn Zangibili besides constructed the old Kaisarea or covered bazaars, and the markets or shops, and houses of stone, and Aden returned to its former state (of prosperity); but when Seif El Islam entered Aden, Ibn Zanjibili devoted all his property for religious purposes at Mekka in the year 575 A.H. El Malik El Maiz Taghtageen ibn Eiyoob built a block of houses, the whole of which were shops at the gate, and he gave over the new Kaisarea to the druggists. Then Motamid Razi-ul-deen Mohammed bin Ali El Tukreeti erected buildings in the name of Malik El Mesaood Eusof bin Mohammed bin Ali Bekr, and the population increased in it; and they built houses and amassed property, and many Arabs from all parts came and settled there.

Afterwards Motamid Mohammed bin Ali built a beautiful bath, and the people dug wells and erected mosques with pulpits, and its splendour returned, and it is certain that it arose after the port of Abien had become ruined. And the merchants removed from the city of Abien and dwelt at Kalhat and Magdisho, and the three cities grew up at that time, but God knows.

*Description of Aden.*

The town is in a valley surrounded by the sea; its climate is so bad that it turns wine into vinegar in the space of ten days. The water is derived from wells, and is also brought in by an aqueduct two fursakhs long. The sweet water wells in Aden are—Bir Hulkum and El Sultaniya, Bir Ali bin Abi Burkat ibn El Katib, very old; Bir Ahmed bin El Museeb; Bir ibn Abi Gharat, very old, it is near the gate of Aden; Bir Mukaddum, also very old; three wells belonging to Daood bin Muzmoon, the Jew, and three wells belonging to Sheikh Omar bin Hossein, a well of Ali bin Hossein El Azruk; Bir Jaafir, very ancient and forty cubits deep; Bir Zafran known by its trough, and which is set apart for Moslems. I was informed by Abdulla bin Mohammed bin Yehia that the water of the Zafran well was carried to all the towns of Yemen, because, he said, Seif-ul-Dowla Ababak Soukar, a slave of Malik El Maiz Ismail bin Taghtageni, drank at the house of Motamid Mohammed bin Ali El Tukreeti some wine of very agreeable flavour, and he said to him—"Of what is this wine made." Motamid replied, "Of water from the Zafran well. If I steep Kadhy in this water and leave it in the sun, it becomes wine (Nebeed), and it requires neither honey nor anything else being put in." From that time they were used to transport this water to Jend, Taiz, Sanaa, and Zebeed to make wine with it. The water certainly is now earthy, though they say it was originally as (sweet) as the Euphrates, but that it has now become somewhat salt on account of the evil deeds of the people. I was informed by Mohammed bin Zankal bin Hassan El Kirmani that an inhabitant of Aden asserted he had been told by Abdulla bin Mohammed Ishaaki El Dai that there were 180 sweet water wells in Aden, and that the water never decreased, but God knows.

*Account of the arrival of ships.*

When a ship arrives near Aden, and the watchmen on the hill perceive it, they shout with a loud voice "Heerya." These watchmen are stationed at the end of Jebel Akhdar, upon which is built the fort El Akhdar originally called Seerseeat. The watchman is unable to distinguish clearly except at the rising and setting of the sun, because at those times the rays of the sun glance on the surface of the water and distant objects appear. He fixes a stick upright before him, and when he fancies he sees anything, on the sea he marks it off on the stick, and if it is a bird or other such thing it moves to the right or left, or rises up or descends, and then he knows it is not a ship; but if the object remain steadfast in a line with the notch on the stick, he knows for certain that it is a ship, and he signals to his companion who shouts "Heerya," and signals to the next watchman, who hails the hulk "O slave in the ship." Then the hulk sends news of the arrival to the Governor of the town, and the messenger after leaving the presence of the Governor informs the officers at the Custom House, and after doing this he shouts with a loud voice from the top of the hill "Heerya, Heerya, Heerya." And when the inhabitants hear the shouts, they ascend the hills and mount the roofs of their houses and gaze to the right and left. If the watchman's signal turn out correct, they give him for each ship one Deenar Mulki and the same amount from the customs; but if he gave a false notice, he gets ten stripes. When the ship draws near, the bearers of good tidings go in boats to meet the ships, and as they approach, they salute the Nakhoda and ask him whence he has come, and the Nakhoda asks them about the country and who the Governor is, and the state of the market; and every one in the ship who has relatives or friends in the country asks concerning them, and receives good news or condolences as the case may be. Then they place something before him and write the name of the Nakhoda

and the names of the merchants. The clerk also notes down everything in the ship of the goods and cloths, and gives them the paper, and the bearers of good news get into their boat to return to their shore. All of them then go in a body to the Governor and give him the clerk's manifest, in which are written the names of the merchants, &c., and they give an account of the ship, whence it has come, and what merchandize it has brought. When they leave the Governor they go about the town acquainting those whose friends have arrived of their near meeting, and they receive the reward of good news from each. When the vessel arrives in harbour and anchors, the Naib of the Sultan comes on board, and the examiner also, and he searches man after man, examining even their turbans, hair, sleeves, trousers, and under their armpits; and in the same way a matron searches the women. When the merchants land the next day, they bring their personal baggage, and after three days they land their cloth and merchandize at the Custom House, where they open every package and count piece by piece; and if the merchandize is saleable by weight, they weigh it in a steel-yard, and the Sheik assesses all the articles very heavily indeed until nothing is left; the merchants swearing by God Almighty that they have acted straightforwardly before the Sheiks. Ibn Mojawir says at such times despondency comes over the merchant, and grief kills him, and he remains in the valley of death at having been treated in such a way as to lose both blessedness and salvation.

*Account of Customs duties.*

Truly the duties were introduced in the days of the Beni Zurreea, and they say that the first who invented them was a certain Jew named Khalaj El Mahawendi, whose rules were conformed to until his death. On the bahar of pepper a duty of 8 deenars was taken besides a showabi or convoy tax of 1 deenar, and 2 deenars on its leaving the Custom House; on a package of indigo, 4 deenars showabi tax, and on its leaving the Custom House a quarter deenar; on a bahar of assafœtida 8 deenars, and on a bahar of cherry bark 3½ deenars; on a bahar of tabasheer they levied 20⅔ deenars, and 1 deenar showabi; on Ood el-dafoo (aloes wood) half the value was taken; and on a frasila of camphor 25⅔ deenars; on a bahar of cardamoms 7 deenars; on a frasila of cloves 10 deenars and showabi 1 deenar, and from a frasila of 10 maunds they take 20 lbs.; on a frasila of saffron 3⅓ deenars; on a bahar of flax 7½ deenars, and when a ship is sold the vendor pays a fee of 10 per cent.; on iron they take half the value, a tax introduced in the days of the Dowla Seif El Islam Taghtageen bin Eiyoob, who first took it from Abi El Hossein El Baghdadi, or, as some say, from a certain Kirawani in the year 598; on house owners a fourth part and some say a third and two deenars for notification; on a bahar of madder 12 deenars, introduced in the days of the Dowla Malik El Maiz Ismail bin Taghtageen, before whose time the duty was 2 deenars, or as some say 3; and on a bahar of tamarinds 3 joz; and on ten Mokalib or chemises 2½ deenars; on 10 goats three-quarter of a jaiz; on each sheep a quarter; and on each horse when it enters the town 50 deenars, introduced in the reign of Malik Nasir Eiyoob bin Taghtageen bin Eiyoob; on each horse when exported by sea they take 70 deenars; and on each slave 2 deenars, and when one is taken out through the gate half a deenar; on slave children from Sindapoor 8 deenars and 1 deenar showabi; and they take on these children when passed out half a deenar each, which goes to the liquor contractor; on a piece of silk of Zebeed manufacture half a deenar and 1 jaiz; on white cloth one-eighth; on dark coloured clothes 3 carats; on plaid waistcloths a quarter and 1 jaiz, and per score of coverlets (or cloaks) four deenars; per score of handwoven fabrics 2½ deenars, and the same on scarves; per score of unbleached Indian cloths 2½ deenars; on large striped linens 2 joz and 2 carats, and on small ditto 2 jaiz and 2 fuloos; on every bag of millet one-eighth and God knows and orders.

*Account of the introduction of the showabi tax.*

The Kings of the Beni Zurreea were unacquainted with vessels of war, and remained so until the arrival in Yemen of Shums-ul-dowla Tooran Shah bin Eiyoob,

who brought with him some war vessels. After him Othman bin Ali El Zanzibili El Tukreeti became ruler of Aden, and the war vessels remained with him until he fled and Seif El Islam Taghtageen bin Eiyoob entered Yemen, and one of the most sagacious of the inhabitants counselled him saying—How do you consider it lawful to take customs from merchants? He replied, I do as the Kings of the Beni Eiyoob did in following an old custom. The man said they used to take it from the people by force, but do thou take it in such a way that you may obtain the thanks of the people. Seif El Islam replied, And how can I do that? His adviser said, Send these war vessels to sea that they may protect the merchants from pirates, and so have honourable employment instead of lying uselessly rolling in the sun. He said, By God, you have come with good advice, and he despatched the vessels to India, where they were stationed off Ras Manadih to protect the merchantmen from the attacks of corsairs, and they remained thus until the year 613 A.H. After that there came to him some of the chief men, and said, God perpetuate the reign of Our Lord the Sultan, in that His Highness' treasury expends every year, on the war vessels 50,000 or 60,000 deenars without any return; but if His Highness were to take this amount from the merchants, it would be no loss to them. He said, How is that? They replied, On every 1,000 deenars of customs let there be taken also 100 deenars for the war vessels which will be for His Highness, and it will not burthen the merchants much. And this plan was adopted in the days of the Dowla El Mesood Eusof bin Mohammed ibn Ali Bekr bin Eiyoob, and it remained so until the year 625 A.H. * * * * *

*Articles that are not taxed.*

Articles imported from Egypt, such as wheat, flour, sugar, rice, soap, el rakee, hyssop, perfumery, olive oil, oil of el jar, pickled olives, and everything connected with its transport, nuts for sweetmeats, if in small quantities, and honey in small quantities, and whatever is brought from India for re-exportation by sea, and pickled emblie, myrobalans, cushions, pillows, bracelets, leather tablecloths, rice, kichree, which is rice and pulse mixed, simsim, soap, red ochre, poisons, karanful wood, garabi cloth, which is manufactured in Malabar, the productions of Shehr, maklaj, which are split dates with the stones extracted, and salt fish: these, however, are chargeable with duty if they have the heads on, but not otherwise, and Indian sandals, on which, however, duty is charged if furnished with straps, but not otherwise, sheep and goats also are not taxed, and beautiful slave girls brought from Dabul and large-eyed slave boys brought from India are not charged.

*Innovations at Aden.*

When it was the month of Jemadi el Awal in the year 624, or more correctly 625, a Dar El Wakalat was established in Aden, and on all merchandize on which no customs were taken they imposed a tax. At the present time they levy five taxes altogether, *viz.*, the old tax which is the customs, the showabi tax, the Dar El Wakalat tax of one carat in the deenar, the Dar El Zakat, and brokerage. The Nakhoda Othman bin Oomar El Amdi arrived once from Egypt and was found to have with him two maunds of aloes wood which they took from him, and when the time came to settle accounts the maund of aloes was valued at six deenars, so 1½ deenars were charged for the customs and half a deenar for the showabi tax. It was then valued in the Wakalat at 25 deenars, and it was charged eight deenars and two daniks for Wakalat, 1¼ deenars for Zakat, and half a deenar for brokerage, which altogether came to 15 deenars, so after deducting the price of the aloes six deenars there remained a balance against him of nine deenars. The Nakhoda Othman bin Omar El Amdi protested, and said, by God Almighty I gain nothing by it, not a single fuls; is it not enough that you take from me the two maunds of wood for nothing, but you must demand of me nine deenars besides! And the Ameer Nasir-ul-deen Nasir bin Faroot and his followers came upon them at that time, and he said—This man is constantly coming to Aden

and should we take from him double! and he mediated between them until he squared the account * * * * * * It is said that a ship once arrived on which the customs duties came to 80,000 deenars. There used to anchor every year under Jebel Seera 70 or 80 ships or more perhaps, but not less. And they despatched from Aden every year four treasure parties to the fort of Taiz, *viz.*, the receipts on the ship arrivals from India, the receipts from tribes entering Aden, the export duty on horses to India and the receipts from ships journeying to India. Each of these treasure remittances amounted to 150,000 deenars, or more, but not less, but this has ceased in our time, 625 A.H. The circulation of Aden in the time of the Beni Zurreea was gold of Sanaa on the Sultani standard, but less than it and the currency of the country was gold Maliki, whereof $4\frac{1}{2}$ deenars equalled one Egyptian deenar. The deenar was divided into quarters, each quarter being equal to three joz, each jaiz to eight fuloos, and each fuls to two beidhas, and it is said the first who struck the Maliki deenar was Ahmed bin Ali El Sulehi at Sanaa.

They sell roosi (a kind of cloth) by the Kasba, the length of which is four cubits of iron, and they sell teak planks by the iron cubit, and everything was sold by auction to the highest bidder, and similarly slaves and slave girls.

True Copy
H. Hildebrand
Superintendent

108552

Exd.—J. T.

BOMBAY BRANCH
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